

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1. (currently amended): A method of packaging a rolled article by winding a packaging sheet having skirt members on respective opposite side edges thereof around the rolled article which has a rolled elongate sheet with end packaging members having planar portions attached respectively to opposite sides of said rolled article ~~thereof~~, comprising the steps of:

gripping a side edge of said packaging sheet and feeding the packaging sheet to a winding position to position the packaging sheet in the winding position;

positioning said rolled article with respect to said packaging sheet in said winding position;

attaching an end of said packaging sheet to an end of said elongate sheet of said rolled article;

rotating said rolled article while gripping an opposite end of said packaging sheet to wind said packaging sheet around said rolled article; and

mounting said skirt members on said planar portions of said end packaging members while pressing said planar portions of the end packaging members against respective opposite ends of said rolled article.

2. (previously presented): A method according to claim 1, further comprising the step of:

displacing the gripped opposite end of said packaging sheet toward said rolled article in synchronism with the rotation of said rolled article.

3. (previously presented): A method according to claim 1, further comprising the steps of:

pressing said packaging sheet against said rolled article by rollers, and

after said packaging sheet is pressed against said rolled article by rollers, releasing the opposite end of said packaging sheet, and winding said packaging sheet around said rolled article.

4. (currently amended): An apparatus for packaging a rolled article by winding a packaging sheet having skirt members on respective opposite side edges thereof around the rolled article which has a rolled elongate sheet with end packaging members having planar portions attached respectively to opposite sides of said rolled article ~~thereof~~, comprising:

a packaging sheet feed mechanism for gripping a side edge of said packaging sheet and feeding the packaging sheet to a winding position to position the packaging sheet in the winding position;

a rotating and supporting mechanism for positioning said rolled article with respect to said packaging sheet in said winding position, and rotating said rolled article;

an attaching mechanism for attaching an end of said packaging sheet to an end of said

elongate sheet of said rolled article;

a packaging sheet holding mechanism for gripping an opposite end of said packaging sheet and moving the packaging sheet toward said rolled article when said rolled article is rotated;

a pressing mechanism for pressing on the planar portions of the end packaging members against respective opposite ends of said rolled article; and

a skirt installing mechanism for installing said skirt members on said planar portions of said end packaging members while said pressing mechanism presses on said end packaging members;

wherein the skirt members are mounted on the planar portions of the end packaging members while the rolled article is rotated, and

wherein the pressing mechanism presses on parts of planar outer circumferential edge portions of the end packaging members.

5. (original): An apparatus according to claim 4, wherein said packaging sheet feed mechanism comprises:

clamp means for gripping the side edge of said packaging sheet; and
moving means for moving said clamp means to said winding position.

6. (original): An apparatus according to claim 4, wherein said rotating and supporting mechanism comprises:

a pair of engaging means for engaging the opposite ends of said rolled article;
displacing means for moving said engaging means symmetrically toward and away from

each other; and

rotating means for rotating said rolled article through said engaging means.

7. (original): An apparatus according to claim 6, wherein said pressing mechanism is displaceable in unison with said engaging means by said displacing means.

8. (original): An apparatus according to claim 6, wherein said skirt installing mechanism is displaceable in unison with said engaging means by said displacing means.

9. (original): An apparatus according to claim 4, wherein said attaching mechanism comprises:

positioning and holding means for positioning and holding the end of said elongate sheet;
and

pressing means for pressing the end of said packaging sheet against the end of said elongate sheet positioned and held by said positioning and holding means, with a joint means interposed therebetween.

10. (original): An apparatus according to claim 4, further comprising:
rollers for pressing said packaging sheet against said rolled article.

11. (original): An apparatus according to claim 4, wherein said skirt members are made of a shrink material which is shrinkable when heated, and said skirt installing mechanism comprises heating means for shrinking and installing said skirt members on said end packaging members.